

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 6, 7, 12, 13, 18, 19, and 24 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A speech signal processing apparatus comprising:
distortion obtaining means for obtaining a respective modification distortion
~~between synthesis units before and after modification for each of a plurality of synthesis units,~~
~~each respective modification distortion being a distortion between a respective unmodified~~
~~individual synthesis unit and the individual synthesis unit after modification;~~
selection means for selecting synthesis units based on the modification
distortion obtained by said distortion obtaining means; and
speech synthesis means for performing speech synthesis based on the synthesis
units selected by said selection means.

2-5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said
distortion obtaining means uses a value obtained by adding the obtained modification distortion
~~between the synthesis units before and after modification~~ and a concatenation distortion
generated by concatenating a synthesis unit to another synthesis unit.

7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said
distortion obtaining means calculates a weighted sum of the obtained modification distortion

~~between the synthesis units before and after modification~~ and a concatenation distortion generated by concatenating a synthesis unit to another synthesis unit.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said distortion obtaining means calculates the modification distortion using a cepstrum distance.

10. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said distortion obtaining means includes a table storing distortions, and determines the modification distortion by referring to the table.

11. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said distortion obtaining means includes a table storing concatenation distortions, and determines a concatenation distortion by referring to the table.

12. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising:

input means for inputting text data;
language analysis means for performing language analysis of the text data; and
prosody-parameter generation means for generating predetermined prosody parameters based on a result of analysis of said language analysis means,

wherein said distortion obtaining means obtains the modification distortion between the synthesis units before and after modification based on the predetermined prosody parameters generated by said prosody-parameter generation means.

13. (Currently Amended) A speech signal processing method comprising:
a distortion obtaining step of obtaining a respective modification distortion between synthesis units before and after modification for each of a plurality of synthesis units,
each respective modification distortion being a distortion between a respective unmodified individual synthesis unit and the individual synthesis unit after modification;
a selection step of selecting synthesis units based on the modification distortion obtained in said distortion obtaining step; and
a speech synthesis step of performing speech synthesis based on the synthesis units selected in said selection step.

14-17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 13, wherein in said distortion obtaining step, a value is obtained by adding the obtained modification distortion between the synthesis units before and after modification and a concatenation distortion generated by concatenating a synthesis unit to another synthesis unit.

19. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 13, wherein in said distortion obtaining step, a weighted sum is calculated of the obtained modification distortion between the synthesis units before and after modification and a concatenation distortion generated by concatenating a synthesis unit to another synthesis unit.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 13, wherein in said distortion obtaining step, the modification distortion is calculated using a cepstrum distance.

22. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 13, wherein in said distortion obtaining step, a table storing distortions is provided, and the modification distortion is determined by referring to the table.

23. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 13, wherein in said distortion obtaining step, a table storing concatenation distortions is provided, and a concatenation distortion is determined by referring to the table.

24. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 13, further comprising:

an input step of inputting text data;
a language analysis step of performing language analysis of the text data; and

a prosody-parameter generation step of generating predetermined prosody parameters based on a result of analysis in said language analysis step,
wherein in said distortion obtaining step, a the modification distortion is obtained between the synthesis units before and after modification based on the predetermined prosody parameters generated in said prosody-parameter generation step.

25. (Previously Presented) A storage medium, capable of being read by a computer, storing a program for executing a method according to any one of Claims 13, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, and 24.